

NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES
NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL
OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

SPACE SCIENCE BOARD

January 5, 1962

Dr. Detlev W. Bronk
President
National Academy of Sciences
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Dr. Bronk:

As you know, one of the important objectives of the last meeting of the Space Science Board was to arrive at recommendations to you on the best way to reorient the Board in the light of the present national space effort. Our discussions and those with you, Dr. Wiesner and Mr. Webb were most useful in crystallizing the general character of our recommendations concerning future Board objectives, although there was insufficient time for the discussion of every salient point on which we believe we should make recommendations. Based upon the beginnings made at this Board meeting, I wrote to each member on December 1, 1961 asking them to review a draft memorandum to you which would summarize our suggestions for the future objectives and composition of the Board. I also emphasized in my letters to Board members on December 1 that the current SSB must continue to function in its customary way until you can consider and act upon our recommendations. I have now heard from every Board member and, with their concurrence, transmit the enclosed memorandum summarizing our recommendations. Several additional comments are relevant.

First, you will note that the attached memorandum recommends the formation, among others, of three new committees:

- 7.3.5 Ad hoc Committee on International Space Science
Programs under the chairmanship of Harrison Brown
- 7.3.10 Ad hoc Committee on NASA/University Relations under
the chairmanship of J. A. Van Allen
- 7.3.11 Space Science Summer Study under the chairmanship of
J. A. Van Allen

In view of the importance of initiating action in these areas immediately, I have already taken steps to bring these committees into being, and plans for their work are proceeding. Particularly with respect to the

January 5, 1962

latter two, those dealing with NASA/university relations and the summer study, these programs were developed after mutual consultation with Mr. Webb and other senior officials of NASA. Thus, we are assured of NASA's wholehearted collaboration and support for the objectives of these programs.

Second, I am sure that you appreciate my reasons for wishing to resign as Chairman of the Space Science Board. The pressure of my new responsibilities as President of the Graduate Research Center makes it imperative for me to drop certain extra commitments as soon as possible. However, recent discussions with Jerry Wiesner and Jim Webb have convinced me that I cannot be precipitous in stepping down since the Academy and Board roles in providing policy and programmatic advice to the government are so important at this critical time. Consequently, I wish to indicate to you that I am willing to remain as Chairman of the Board, subject to your own wishes, until the summer study under Van Allen is complete -- i.e., until next fall. Of course, should you reach a decision concerning the next Board Chairman at any time during this period, I should be delighted to turn over the reins while making myself available as desirable during the transition period.

Third, many suggestions have been received from present Board members for a new Chairman. Among current Board members Van Allen's, Rossi's, Goldberg's and Simpson's names have arisen most frequently and I believe that any one of these individuals would do a magnificent job. Other suggestions such as Norman Ramsey and I. Rabi have also been received, and I am sure that you will have had several other nominations. In my view, the selection of the appropriate scientist to head the Board is a critical decision, particularly at this juncture in the national program. It is my strong belief, and one in which there is substantially complete agreement among all Board members, that the new Board Chairman must be acquainted with the national space program, and particularly must be knowledgeable in the program of space research.

Fourth, the formation of an Executive Committee of the Board is a matter which I believe must have immediate attention. As you will note from the enclosed memorandum, both Mr. Webb and Dr. Dryden feel the need for frequent consultation and are most anxious that such a body be established without delay. Our recommendations for the composition of the Executive Committee are contained in the attached memorandum. In view of the importance which both NASA and the Board attach to the activities and role of the proposed Executive Committee, I believe that it would be highly desirable for you to make the appointments suggested in the attached memorandum, if you are in agreement.

January 5, 1962

Fifth, several of the original SSB committees are dissolved according to our recommendations for reorganization. These committees include:

<u>Committee on</u>	<u>Chairman</u>
Chemistry of Space & Exploration of Moon & Planets	H. C. Urey
Optical & Radio Astronomy	L. Goldberg
Future Vehicular Development	D. F. Hornig
Space Projects	B. B. Rossi
Atmospheres of the Earth & Planets	A. H. Shapley
Physics of Fields and Particles in Space	J. A. Simpson
General Engineering Services & Coordination	O. G. Villard
Meteorological Aspects of Satellites	H. Wexler
Biological Research	H. K. Hartline

It is my thought that I will write to the chairmen, and in many cases to the respective committee members, expressing Academy and Board thanks for their assistance. In some cases the respective chairmen have also indicated they wish to write directly to their committee members. It may be that you will wish to write to committee chairmen or members thanking them, on behalf of the Academy, for their assistance in planning the space science program. I hope that we can discuss these letters further.

Finally, several Board members have written thoughtful letters regarding problems in the country's space research effort which, in their judgment, urgently require Board consideration; many of these letters raise topics which transcend the scope of activities summarized in the present memorandum. I wish especially to draw to your attention the enclosed copies of letters to me from Messrs. Goldberg, Shapley and Pittendrigh, although copies of letters from all Board members responding to my letter of December 1 are enclosed. In particular, you will note Dr. Pittendrigh's letter expressing grave concern regarding the question of space biology programs; here, I have already responded to Dr. Pittendrigh's letter by appointing Messrs. Pittendrigh, Lederberg, Lambertsen and Hartline, Board members, to a special ad hoc study group to develop a Board statement regarding space biology in the national program. I agree with Dr. Pittendrigh that this topic is so critical and so urgent that prompt action must be taken and I have asked this ad hoc group to develop a report as promptly as possible for early consideration by the full Board.

During the some three and a half years of the Board's existence we have from time to time found it necessary to originate new committees or to initiate other studies as appropriate under the terms of reference which you defined in your original letter to me of June 26, 1958. However, the extent of the changes which we are proposing at this time appear to be so

Dr. Detlev W. Bronk

- 4 -

January 5, 1962

substantial that we feel your concurrence with respect to the new Board orientation would be most desirable. I should like to ask, therefore, for your review and comments on the proposal set forth in this memorandum and the further recommendations contained in this letter, prior to proceeding with these plans.

I should be most happy to discuss further with you any aspects of our proposals for the future objectives and composition of the Board, if you so desire. I believe that it is important to stress that, in the Board's view, the recent reorganization of NASA and the rapid evolution of the national space objectives make it imperative that the Board be reoriented as rapidly as possible if we are to fulfill Academy objectives and responsibilities in this critical area of scientific research.

Sincerely yours,

L. V. Berkner
Chairman

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